

WikiLeaks founder questioned by Swedish police

August 31 2010, By MALIN RISING , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has been questioned by Swedish police about an allegation that he mistreated a woman, his lawyer said Tuesday.

Leif Silbersky said Assange, an Australian citizen, was questioned by [police](#) in Stockholm for about an hour late Monday and was formally informed of the suspicions against him. Silbersky said his client denies the allegation and is hopeful [prosecutors](#) will drop the case.

Police began investigating Assange earlier this month after two Swedish women accused him of rape and molestation, but prosecutors later closed the rape investigation. Molestation is not a sex crime under Swedish law. It covers offenses such as reckless conduct or inappropriate physical contact. It can result in fines or up to one year in prison.

Assange, who was in Sweden partly to seek legal protection for [WikiLeaks](#), has suggested that the accusations are part of a smear campaign.

The whistle-blower's Internet site has angered Washington by publishing thousands of leaked documents about U.S. military activities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The group has said it has [computer servers](#) in Sweden and other countries and according to the Swedish migration board Assange has applied for a work and residency permit in Sweden.

Investigators have not released details about the accusations against Assange, though a police report obtained by The Associated Press shows both women had befriended him in connection with a seminar he gave in Stockholm on Aug. 14. The report shows they filed their complaints together six days later.

The chief prosecutor in the case, Eva Finne, declined to comment Tuesday.

The women's lawyer, Claes Borgstrom, has demanded a revision of the prosecutor's decision to close the rape investigation, saying both complaints should be investigated as sex crimes.

A separate prosecutor's office in Goteborg, Sweden, is investigating Borgstrom's complaint.

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